

spacious wisdom of this statement. The uniformity of action disclosed in Nature reigns also in the sequences of will and act. Specified motives to volition or impulses to action are simply feelings, and under similar circumstances and conditions, the same feelings and views of things with their external expression perpetually recur in constancy of iteration. And upon this persistent relationship between given surroundings and the relevant feelings which they prompt, we base our social conduct. Knowing the manner in which any man is affected under stated conditions, we concurrently know that the repetition of those conditions will be accompanied by the recurrence of that kind of feeling and expression; and hence, in our actions which involve as data the conduct, congruent or antagonistic, of others, we confidently proceed on the basis of those relations which have already been observed.

Knowledge of the past thus carries predictive power in the future. The practical lesson for the investor is this : knowing how the prices of securities vary under specified external conditions (such as a war, or vigorous trade, or paralysed industry) he perceives the course to pursue—whether to buy or sell—for these changes are simply the outward embodiment of feelings relating to gain or the avoidance of loss. And these feelings, as I have stated, are competent of recognition and approximate measurement in proportion to the kind and intensity of the external events which incite them; their uniformity of exercise enables us to view the future, with reasonable assurance, as though that future were existent now. I proceed, in the following chapter, to describe some of the prominent causes which exalt or depress the feelings of man, and which find their expression in the form of an advance or decline of values.